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ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that explored the experiences of women and black and/or ethnic minority men in United Kingdom educational institutions are presented in this paper, with a focus on the strategies, and personal and institutional obstacles, experienced by those groups as well as the management strategies that enhanced their administrative advancement. In-depth interviews were conducted with 38 senior managers, principals, headteachers, and academics from England and Scotland. Eight respondents were black men, 10 were black women, and 20 were white women. Other data were derived from consultations with other educators and representatives from commerce and industry. Overall, respondents used a democratic, or "flat," management style, though differences existed among subgroups. A continuum of institutional adoption of equal opportunity practices was identified, which indicated that smaller, lower-status educational institutions made greater progress. Nonwhite staff were significantly underrepresented in most institutions, and activism played an important role in minorities' career trajectories. A conclusion is that racism and sexism appear to be as endemic in education as elsewhere; however, discriminatory practices have become insidious rather than explicit. Appendices contain information on methodology, institutional practices, and advice to aspiring managers. (Contains 24 references.) (LMI)

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FINAL FULL REPORT

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* Involvement for only part of the project.

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Cost of report and postage: £5 - cheques made payable to South Bank Polytechnic.

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'OUTSIDE OF THE NORM!
EQUITY AND MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

BACKGROUND

In January 1990, funding was gained from the Equal Opportunities Unit of the European Commission for a project based in the U.K. which aimed to draw on the experiences of women and black and ethnic minority managers in educational institutions. It aimed to:

> (i) explore the strategies, and personal and institutional obstacles experienced by women and black and/or ethnic minority managers and (ii) identify management strategies in educational institutions that enhance the promotion of women and black and/or ethnic minority men and women.

There is considerable evidence that women and individuals from black and ethnic minority groups are under-represented as managers in all sectors of education (Crabb, 1987). There is also evidence that equal opportunities policies are being increasingly developed as appropriate for modern educational institutions in the 1990s (Feather & Russell, 1990; Taylor, 1990). At present, there are white women and black and ethnic minority men and women who have achieved senior positions in their institutions and in so doing, have gathered experiences and learnt strategies which are of value to others in similar positions or to institutions which have a commitment to eradicating sexist and racist bias. It was believed that one way forward was to draw on the experiences of this group of people in devising change strategies.

Whilst the European Commission award was modest (14,000 ECUs or £10,000) it provided the resource for the investigation of this topic of equity and management practice at various levels: through exploring the 'life histories' of members of under-represented groups who have achieved senior positions, and by investigating good equal opportunities practices in the commercial sector in the U.K., and in educational institutions in North America.

THEMES FROM THE LITERATURE

In a wide-ranging review of the literature on equal opportunities (in particular, 'race' and gender), and management issues both generally and in educational institutions specifically, it was found that whilst there is a burgeoning literature on women and management there is far less in respect of management and 'race' and ethnic minorities. A number of themes permeating the literature on equity and management in education are especially pertinent to this study.

a) ***Management has been conceptualised as 'masculine'*** ie an activity concerned with the 'male' qualities of functionality, rationality and instrumentality. The promotion of managerialism in education has, according to Al Khalifa (1989), made the position of women worse, since women are less likely to want to associate themselves with management's male stereotype. According to Barsoux (1987), a new concept of management appeared in the 1980s: one that is accessible and supportive rather than distant and directive, and consensual rather than encouraging conflict and confrontation. There is also strong evidence that women develop different leadership styles from those of their male peers. They tend to be more democratic and friendly, more open to change and have a greater ability to work collaboratively (Marshall, 1985), though they sometimes show discomfort in wielding power over others (Woo, 1985)

b) ***Women and black and ethnic minorities experience discrimination in promotion.*** Black men and women find greater difficulty in gaining employment and find promotiom less easy to obtain than their white colleagues (Brennan & McGeevor, 1990). Women are under-represented as managers in all parts of the education sector except at primary level (Crabb, 1987) and where evidence exists on black groups, inequality is also apparent in promotion patterns (Grambs, 1987). Black teachers tend to be older, disproportionately grouped around the lowest grades and less likely to gain promotiom before leaving their first school. They are also less likely to be encouraged to apply for promotion, and to apply successfully for in-service training (Gibbes, 1980; Ranger, 1988). Black women are doubly-disadvantaged: they experience discrimination on gender as well as

on racial grounds (McKellar, 1989; Al Khalifa, 1989). There is also a high level of sexual and racial harassment though 'harassers' may be unaware that their behaviour is offensive (Addison & Al Khalifa, 1988).

Senior positions are frequently blocked for women and non-white groups because they do not have the prior requirement of middle management status. When they achieve senior status, they report feelings of high visibility, believe that they are often treated merely as representatives of an (under-represented) group and receive continual requests to be a token presence on senior committees (Bangar & McDermott, 1989). They also report feelings of isolation and loneliness and frequently perceive their workplace as male-dominated, hostile and contradictory (Marshall, 1987).

c) ***Women's career patterns and their domestic responsibilities*** are also deemed to be important. A greater percentage of women managers compared to men are single and childless (Marshall, 1985) and, in the main, male and female career patterns are different. Women tend to 'tread water' when they have young children as their child-care responsibilities compete with their professional roles. However, different work conditions such as job-shares and career break packages can lead to career continuity (Widdowson-Migniuolo, 1989).

d) ***Mentoring*** is a key feature in promotion chances. For example, women teachers are more likely to gain promotion after seeking specific advice and guidance at crucial stages in their careers. Conversely, insufficient advice may be a severe handicap (Simmons, 1987). Black teachers are also reported as preferring to discuss professional issues with someone from the same sex or ethnic background but, unfortunately, their line managers continue to be likely to be white men (Myers, 1989).

e) ***Different styles of management*** have become a significant factor in studies of women managers. Erickson (1985) reported that women develop leadership styles which are neither 'masculine' nor 'feminine' but 'androgyne' - that is self- rather than culturally-defined. Rimmer and Davies (1985), in contrast, identify five types of leadership style:

'crusader confident', the 'idealist', the 'ambitious', the 'diffident' and the 'disillusioned'.

Other studies show that many women who gain promotion feel that it is solely due to their personal qualities and deny discrimination is a problem (Woo, 1985). They assume that the main impediments to other women's advancement are their stereotyped attitudes and lack of ambition (Ball, 1987).

METHODOLOGY

The project used a life history approach with key informants chosen from a broad cross section of educational management posts. It was believed that this illuminative form of research would be constructive in identifying key issues concerning the career development of educational managers, and the strategies adopted by individuals and institutions to promote equal opportunities within education.

The identification of key issues, in turn, would provide the basis for further case studies of particular institutions and provide further evidence of the serious need for a database holding both quantitative and qualitative information. At present, neither the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) nor the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) hold information on the numbers and identities of women and black and ethnic minority men and women in senior management positions.

The Main Informants

In choosing key informants, the research team approached leading educationists as well as exploiting its own members' considerable network of colleagues in various branches of education, to identify male and female senior managers from black and ethnic minority groups (Asian and Afro-Caribbean) and female managers from the dominant white culture. Project informants (or participants, interviewees, respondents - all these terms are used interchangeably in the report) were managers in the sense that they had responsibility for the effective operation of their

organisation or a defined part of that institution. They were (with a few exceptions) responsible for staff, budgets and managing information about and within their organisation. Under Local Management of Schools (LMS), and with the independent status of polytechnics and devolved budgets in universities, management has become more complex. Headteachers, senior managers in universities, and polytechnic directors, now have extended management functions and are responsible for strategic planning. Consequently there has been increased delegation of additional management responsibilities to deputies, faculties and departments. How this affected project informants was one feature of the research. The group of informants from across England and two from Scotland included:

1. Polytechnic directorate members and university Vice-Chancellors and Principals	5
2. Principals and deputies in Further and Adult Education	4
3. Senior academics (one without direct management functions)	3
4. Headteachers in primary and secondary schools	11
5. Senior administrators in quangos, colleges, unions and validating bodies	7
6. Senior officers and advisers in local authorities and HMI (not all advisers and inspectors had budgetting responsibilities)	9

Although the project team aimed to identify the most senior manager in each organisation, it was sometimes necessary to go some way down the hierarchy to find an informant who was black or from an ethnic minority.
Of the 38 informants, 30 were women, 8 were black men and 10 were black women (of Afro-Caribbean or Asian origin) and 20 were white women. The members of the group had in common sufficient professional experience of educational management and its structures to be able to communicate how it feels to be in a senior position and the struggle (or not) they had to get there. The research team was thus able to accumulate a shared perspective on the factors necessary to achieve career success and what it is like to

have managerial responsibility when you are from a group under-represented in senior management and in educational institutions generally. It was felt that these views would be particularly helpful to others developing policies and practices for their personal and institutional development.

Other informants

In addition to this main source of information, the research team consulted other educationists and representatives from commerce and industry through visits, workshops, interviews and seminars (see Appendix I for details). These additional sources of information paralleled and validated the information received from the main group of informants.

The Interviews

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed and piloted by the research team. The final version designated the main areas of interest as: individual career path; personal management style; institutional management approach; and equal opportunities development. Informants were also asked to provide advice to others like themselves who wish to rise to managerial positions in their institutions, and also to offer suggestions for organisations wanting to develop more equitable staff policies. It was decided that the Afro-Carribean researchers, all of whom were female, should interview all the non-white informants. (See Appendix I for a more detailed discussion of methodology.)

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

The themes emerging from the analysis of the interviews have been organised according to the format of the interviews: namely, individual career path, individual management style, institutional management approach and equal opportunities. We also include information gained from visits to companies and abroad. Where appropriate we refer to the main group of informants/interviewees as follows: black female (BF), black male (BM) and white female (WF). Many of the quotations that follow are in the third

person because they derive from the written (and verified) accounts of the interviews.

To reiterate, what follows is an analysis of informants' **perceptions** of their careers, management styles and institutions, rather than information gained in other ways, for example, by observation, talking to colleagues etc. Hence, informants may describe their management style as 'open' but other staff in their institution may not agree with this description. Nevertheless, what is most important in this context is that these were the management strategies which our informants thought were most 'effective' in enhancing possibilities for under-represented groups to reach comparable senior management positions. Neither had the project team any independent corroboration of informants' articulation of racial and/or sexual discrimination. However, there were far too many instances quoted to assume that discrimination was imaginary or specific to individuals or contexts.

INDIVIDUAL CAREER PATH

The essence of the life history method is to encourage informants to choose what they consider are significant features in their own lives. In this project, interviewees were asked to focus, in particular, on their own career development and to identify factors, people and institutional strategies which had enhanced or presented obstacles to their career.

This analysis of the responses does not seek to describe individual stories but picks out salient points which may be helpful in enhancing the management opportunities for hitherto under-represented groups. First, we identify common factors in the careers of senior managers in education including supportive frameworks, good academic qualifications and personal drive and confidence. Second, we focus on distinguishable routes to senior management through personal networks, openings through designated equal opportunity posts and projects, and individualistic paths. Finally, we report career strategies used by our informants ranging from the few who appear to have devised a deliberate career strategy as opposed to those who have drifted from one post to another, to those who seized opportunities as they occurred or who 'bounced back' after having been confronted by major obstacles or problems.

Common factors in the career development

i) *A Supportive Framework*

The kinds of support in their careers most mentioned by informants came either from networks of people, mentors or from the supportive structure of the organisations with which they have been connected. Initially, supportive people were found in the immediate and extended family and these were expanded later to include other networks acquired by individuals' own efforts.

Among the networks of people, relatives and especially parents, have provided role models in terms of a work ethic and, as one informant put it, 'establishing an ambitious climate'. This was particularly noticeable

among working class families where it was unusual, if not unknown, to progress to further and higher education. Ambitious parents were reported as being willing to make substantial efforts to promote their children's interests. For example, one informant's mother, deserted by his father, worked in order to be able to send her son to a highly academic and selective school which also had a reputation for sending pupils to Oxbridge. Such parents were major influences; helping, supporting and even shielding their children into adult life, although not all were able to give informed advice on educational opportunities. Subsequently, spouses and children were also reported as giving loving support and time for individuals to pursue their interests and careers.

Often, parents were already part of wider ideological, religious or political groupings (none of the informants mentioned political connections other than Labour or Communist Parties). Support from the community was seen as very important by black informants - especially those who were not born in the UK - and provided a crucial bedrock for individual action. Religion - usually Christian - and the church seemed also to play a significant role in building up confidence and developing social skills.

Only female informants - and not all of them - mentioned having a supportive spouse or partner. Neither did all informants volunteer information about their personal circumstances but it was noticeable, not surprisingly, that career aspirations of some (white) women were mentioned as a contributory factor to their marriages being dissolved.

Many informants referred to their childhood headteachers and teachers as having encouraged them in their schoolwork and raised their aspirations. As careers progressed, professional support frameworks became established. Initially, these might have been based on individuals such as senior colleagues who acted as mentors of junior staff. Informants reported finding mentors helpful at some point in their careers although very few had continuous recourse to a single mentor. Women also mentioned use of informal networks for additional support and encouragement, and some identified temporary mentors who advised them during certain phases of their career. Mentoring was seen as a strategy, familiarly used by men to

enhance their careers, although according to one informant (a white male workshop participant) it is less common in education than in other professions.

Formal mentoring systems were perceived as less likely to succeed than individuals finding their own mentors. Senior colleagues - often the deputy head or principal - were identified as being potentially helpful. Occasionally, a previous employer might take a sustained interest in his or her protege. Two examples of managers being headhunted for their present posts are indicative of how much personal contact is built into the promotional system.

Employers have also provided supportive frameworks for career development, especially where equal opportunities policies have been prioritised (for example, by some London local authorities). Hence. the majority of black informants advanced their careers by working in black organisations, community projects or in equal opportunity posts. For example, one woman's life and career has been devoted entirely to promoting equal opportunities issues. In fact, only three of the black informants have not held a post concerned with equal opportunities at some point in their career whereas only two of the 20 white informants have held such a post. 'Enlightened' organisations, thus, appear able to provide the support and means of establishing identity for those experiencing discrimination.

Most black informants reported either remaining isolated in the early stages of their career or trying to establish networks within their organisations - like one who found himself snatching time in cubby holes for meetings with his black colleagues. Although black individuals who are established in their careers might be expected to take the lead and share their experiences with black colleagues, an interesting cautionary note was introduced by one informant. With so few senior positions going to blacks, he claimed, 'it is too risky to give away trade secrets when competing for the same small slice of cake'.

Some women cited women's groups and networks which had helped them to identify the unequal power relationships in society generally and in

education, in particular. These groups and networks have also provided support in developing and maintaining increased self-confidence and choosing appropriate career strategies.

Whether support comes from people or from organisations, it seems clear that most people who are black or from an ethnic minority, are inevitably enmeshed in equal opportunities issues. This is also true of many white women but by no means all. Some felt that identification with 'women's issues' or feminist groups would have hindered rather than helped their career advancement.

ii) *Good Academic Qualifications*

The importance of qualifications was often mentioned by informants. All have a first degree (usually in Humanities or Social Sciences) and/or another educational qualification. Half the group has a second degree and seven have doctorates - one of whom failed her 11 plus. As one might expect of top educationists, it is a well qualified group, possibly because, as informants claimed, lack of appropriate qualifications is often cited as a reason for non-appointment of (black or female) staff.

Unexpectedly, few have management qualifications. Two informants made reference to attending short management courses but none had gained a formal qualification. However, this may reflect the generally low priority given to management training and skills within the education sector or the fact that existing management courses, slow to incorporate equal opportunities issues, proved unappealing. The situation, however, seems to be changing, especially with shifts in organisational structures towards more autonomy for staffing and budgetting becoming the responsibility of individual institutions rather than local authorities or other large bureaucracies.

iii) *Ethos of Hard Work*

All informants emphasised the need for hard work - to gain and retain management positions. This may well be true of the average white male

manager but perceptions were that groups which are discriminated against, have to make even more effort.

> 'If you are a woman, you need to do more and be prepared to make sacrifices'. (WF)

> 'As a black woman, there is more to the job than the title. All levels of staff expect a demonstration of your ability and justification of your appointment', (BW)

A woman very senior in the world of higher education claimed to work 15 hours a day; people took on extra commitments such as committee work, to gain experience and become more visible; a black woman worked long, unsociable hours to the detriment, she believed, of her son's education; and three informants, all white married women, mentioned that there was so little time available outside work when their children were young, that friends and hobbies were almost totally excluded from their lives. Later in this report, we refer to ways in which these managers felt that the organisations for which they worked, had exploited their willingness by overloading them.

Women informants expressed a general discomfort about conflict, especially with men who behaved aggressively to female management. They reported, therefore, preferring to be prepared and in thorough command of their work, partly because this boosted their self-confidence and partly because they did not want to be caught out - but 'I never let them know that'. (WF)

iv) *Development of personal self-confidence*

> 'As a black person, you have to be very strong, have conviction and belief in oneself, which is very difficult given the nature of discrimination.' (BF)

Self-confidence was identified as the key to becoming and remaining a manager and those with the longest experience tended to be more relaxed; for example, a senior administrator said she now had the self-confidence to use any strategy - even accepting being mistaken on the telephone for being

the secretary, without being overly strident or assertive. One woman said that having a daughter had given her confidence. Informants frequently reiterated this need for self-confidence and it figured largely in the 'admonitions to would-be managers' listed in Appendix III. But, material factors were also important and it, therefore, was not easy for some to acquire this confidence, especially if they came from a working-class background.

> 'I never felt that I was any good at anything and I was never made to feel I was good'. (WF)

v) *Faced with obstacles, they fight back*

Few claimed not to have faced any obstacles to their career progression and informants, by definition, in having achieved senior management positions, had been obliged to overcome many difficulties. Clearly, those who had been overwhelmed by such difficulties were not able to achieve senior manager status and were, therefore, not part of the interview group. This is not to say that the informants were necessarily satisfied with their current status or with the fact that they had combatted unnecessary obstacles such as racism and sexism. There was outspoken resentment of both these forms of discrimination as we shall see later.

Many informants of working-class origin reported feeling 'out of place' and unsure of their abilities even after many years of successful professional life. The findings suggest that there are those who make their working-class and/or ethnic background an advantage, using it to give them support; and others who, perhaps, do not or cannot use their family or community as a source of strength. White women with working-class backgrounds were most likely to express the tensions between women traditionally putting home and children first and pursuing a career. For example:

> 'Part of women's conditioning is not to question a man's right to have a career whereas for a woman, each career moves her further and further outside what is seen as a conventional role.' (WF)

Not everyone reported experiencing obstacles other than those of their own making - such as applying for promotion too early. One informant found that 'opportunities came where I was'. She made some of her most significant career moves while she was working in girls-only schools. When she emerged to take a senior post in a mixed school, 'this was the first time it hit me that this is a man's world' (WF)

Racism and Sexism

Two black men, both educated at Oxbridge, reported not experiencing any obstacles to their career and one suggested that being black seemed irrelevant to his early career until he became more aware of black underachievement in London comprehensive schools.

> 'I could no longer justify to myself being black and living in a white world. Having lived almost as a white person [he was brought up by his white mother] my colour was in some ways almost bizarre in the sense that I was black and everyone else was white'

He also thought that his upper class accent and light skin colour meant that he was perceived as an 'acceptable and soft equal opportunities appointment' unlikely to be threatening or too radical.

Racism was felt more acutely by those brought up in black and/or ethnic minority communities especially if these were also working-class. It was seen as endemic and unstoppable:

> Racism is like an octopus. It is so subtle. You cut off one arm and it grows another.' (BM)

Black informants reported various discriminatory experiences which, they perceived, had impeded their career progression; for example -

- 'being set up' for a job which had already been earmarked for someone else or where there seemed to be an implicit colour bar.

- job applications from black applicants which 'went missing'.

- LEA advisor giving a black female teacher misleading criteria for authority secondment to study for a higher degree.

- several examples of black candidates having to make, seemingly, an inordinate number of applications before obtaining promotion. For example, one man applied for 19 deputy posts before getting one, and then put in 120 headship applications before being interviewed for three, all of which he was offered.

In some cases it seems that promotion opportunities were blocked by line managers who either advised candidates that they were not yet ready for promotion or gave poor references. One informant thought that his headteacher had blocked his own career advancement because, despite being a hard working and obviously capable teacher, he also provided black representation within the staffing body - which could not be replaced easily.

Black informants reported having to deal with this 'hypocritical' form of racism - where senior staff seem very positive about an individual's work but at the same time, actually block career progression. It is now difficult to be as overtly racist and remain within the law as was possible in the 1960s when, as a student, a black male interviewee was refused accommodation in a university hall of residence. Nevertheless, there is still occasionally blatant professional racism such as a headteacher telling a new appointment that she (the head) had been upset when she saw he was black. Another example quoted was that of a black woman teacher being asked why, as a black woman, she was working in a boys' school. The same question was not asked of white female staff. Yet again, a black senior inspector was obliged to do her own secretarial work for eight months as the allocated secretary refused to work for her; white female colleagues of equivalent rank, appointed at the same time, were allocated personal assistants as well as secretaries.

Fear and suspicion of the unfamiliar has meant that many informants met prejudice as children, from peers and teachers. The latter were frequently reported as restricting working class or black children to the lower

streams and discouraging their ambitions - in one case, because the father's first language was Greek!

One difficult form of racism is the patronising attitude of white colleagues who appear surprised if a black person runs a meeting efficiently or speaks well at a conference:

> 'Their expectations are so low that when you outstrip their expectations, they turn around and become almost a fan. (BW)

This can be turned to advantage but at the same time is of some concern to those who experience it. An ironic (or reverse) form of racism identified by the informants was that of well-meaning white colleagues appointing black people to positions for which they were not always suited and which may result in bad experiences for those individuals and the black people who follow them.

Whilst most of this sub-section has dealt with racism, incidents of which were quoted far more than those of a sexist nature, anyone who is outside the norm of white, male management is likely to meet prejudice. Several women reported negative experiences as women: 'you never inherit anything that's good. You always have to go in there and clear up' (BF.) One black woman believed that she was given a task to do in her first job in the expectation that she would fail - she was expected to act as a catalyst and organise staff development with regard to the introduction and use of new technology. There were also several instances reported of informants being given workloads impossible to be completed by one person alone.

The senior managers involved in this study also reported comparable experiences of racism and sexism to those reported extensively in other studies of discriminatory practices. Thus:

Invisibility was mentioned by both black and white respondents - for example, three white women with positions, respectively, of headteacher of a comprehensive school, deputy director of a polytechnic and chief executive of a quango, all reported incidents in which it had been assumed

that they were in junior supporting roles. Their reaction was that they felt they had to prove themselves all the time - it was a continuing feature of life. Another informant, this time a black woman, noticed that her name was always omitted from the list of LEA inspectors; she featured, she felt, only as 'other'.

Stereotyping was another frequently mentioned problem, for example, being the only black individual in college or job situations. This was reported as leading to high visibility and putting the manager under intense pressure not to fail. Thus:

> 'any weakness in performance would be more glaring than any achievements, success she brings to the job.' (BW)

This same informant pointed out the danger of becoming the 'dumping ground for all issues concerning race and equal opportunities'. This is akin to:

Tokenism - and what is meant here is the appointment of women or black and ethnic minority staff, as a political strategy rather than indicating either a genuine institutional commitment to equal opportunities or a belief in the individual's suitability. This has led to considerable overload for some informants yet they have been loth to reject any opportunities for representation. As one informant succintly put it: 'When the institution finds a "good black", everybody wants you'. (BF) Similar situations encountered included what one informant referred to as a 'twofer'. This term applies when two categories of representation required by an institution's equal opportunities policy can be filled by a single person. For example, an Afro-Carribean male deputy head was able to fill two committee positions at once; as a member of an ethnic minority and as a senior manager.

Hostility from colleagues and junior staff was also identified as a potential problem. The most shocking example of this kind reported to the project team involved a black headteacher who received vicious letters, whose family was threatened and where school and home windows were smashed. This head intimated that all the threats came from staff and none from

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pupils. Another reported incident was where, when younger, an informant had been rejected for a teaching practice placement because he was black. In fact, he saw this experience as a personal test of Martin Luther King's statement that there is more racism where there are fewer black people.

A woman who eventually became a headteacher was so startled and enraged by sexism at headship level which generated comments such as, 'The role of a woman teaching is not to be a head', that she kept a 'little blue book' of examples of sexist attitudes of colleagues, peers, parents and 'outsiders'. (WF).

Patronage, that is, surprise when women or black managers are entrusted with the responsibility to do a job well, was also noted. It was as if, having conceded success, senior colleagues went overboard and became, as has been mentioned previously, 'fans' of the individual. This can, of course, be a form of racism or sexism which is not only embarassing but also difficult to confront. Associated with this is the patronising language used particularly by white males of white females: for example, 'my blue-eyed girl' or 'Miss needs her beauty sleep'.

Harassment is a well-publicised aspect of women's working life. Most women had no doubts that they had experienced sexual harassment but had great difficulty in pinning down innuendo. One quoted example of blatant harassment was the verbal abuse experienced by a senior female administrator from building contractors working near her office - something, probably, outside any male administrator's experience. More direct harassment, it was reported, can become almost routine, part of the ethos of organisations - even unexpectedly so. Thus:

> 'Men in ILEA are very sexist despite the policy on the walls. In some cases, it was quite overt that if you were not interested in their sexual advances, you were not going to advance professionally.' (WF)

The headquarters of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), now no longer in existence, was criticised 'as being very masculine' by another informant who said that men often took their meals separately from women.

Additionally, women with children interpreted criticism of their work capabilities as both harassment and a means of undermining their position even when comments were spoken in a half-joking manner; for example: 'Aren't the children suffering?' (WF)

Exploitation was also felt to be a negative feature of professional life whether:

- by institutions which employ untenured, part-time staff members over quite long periods thus depriving them of career and economic benefits. Most of the women who had followed their husband's career wherever it took the family (ie about a quarter of the white informants) tended to have had this experience.

- by senior white male colleagues who have expectations of very hard work and loyalty from junior female staff but who, nevertheless, maintain power positions and oblige them 'to be ever grateful'. One example reported was of a woman who decided to publish an edited book of articles which had appeared over several years in a journal she edited. Her boss would only agree to the publication if his name was on the cover - a suggestion which she rejected. This was echoed in the tendency for women's ideas to be taken over and 'owned' by senior, male colleagues. Challenging the wishes of a senior male colleague led to peremptory rejection for a young woman who could consequently no longer continue to work as before:

> 'The professor just shut the door and that was devastating. This is a gender issue which someone should have explored with me then' (WF))

-by senior management, for example, where a headteacher attempted to restrict a well qualified Asian woman to supply work, but on appeal from the teacher concerned, the local inspector upheld the decision that she should only teach to her specialism, Mathematics and Science, for which she had been appointed.

Lack of Awareness was still perceived to be a problem. It is clear that there remains a substantial core of people working in education who do not

seem to be aware of their discriminatory behaviour. Thus, the possibility, for example, that they might be discriminatory is an anathema to university vice-chancellors - all of them, currently, white males.

> 'Their self-image as fair minded people has proved a real problem to get over in the universities. You are working against the grain of people who feel they have been fair all their lives and couldn't possibly...they don't have the understanding of things like indirect discrimination. It's just not a concept they acknowledge.' (BF)

The reaction of our informants to these various kinds of discrimination has been to work harder and not be put down - but, of course, we are dealing with those who have 'stayed in' despite their experiences of hurtful, discriminatory behaviour. We remain unaware of how many are beaten back by the system and what personal cost this has for individual careers, health and family relationships, as well as for the institutions they might have served.

Other perceived obstacles In this study, interviewees identified other obstacles to their career progression: domestic, lack of qualifications, ageism and financial considerations

Domestic

More white than black women in our study expressed a conflict between home and work especially when there was a perceived need or wish to give up full-time work to look after children. There were two major foci: the partner's career and having children. In the first instance, which partner's job took priority determined where a couple will live. Of 11 white women interviewed by one researcher, seven had followed their husband's career and one had worked in 18 countries across all five continents, moving with her husband's job. The careers of all seven of these women had been affected as they had lost substantial professional ground after each move.

Surprisingly, perhaps, all these women have remained married and it is noticeable that divorce seemed more prevalent when partners lived apart for

professional reasons - but the data is incomplete in relation to some of these personal aspects of informants' lives. Because the life history approach encourages interviewees to direct the agenda, not everyone chose to disclose their personal affairs, nor were they asked to.

It is also worth noting that the balances in informants' relationships with partners appeared to change with age. Thus, two white female informants in very senior positions had husbands who had moved to the latest post with them, in one case taking on major responsibility for childcare. There could be several reasons for this. Men are often slightly older than their partners and are likely to 'peak' earlier in their career - especially if women have had a career break for child bearing. While building up their career after the break, an important job might come up for women at just the time when their partners are wanting to slow down or to change direction. It is important to add, though, that this is rather speculative on the basis of somewhat sparse evidence from this study.

Female respondents reported that getting back to work after a break had not always been easy. One white informant described herself as being 'locked into motherhood' and another reported having to face a rather upper class interviewing panel, the members of which were reassured and gave her the job only when she said she had a nanny to look after the children. However, women did not always see family as an unwelcome obstacle to their career progress. One informant stressed her very satisfying home relationships of mutual benefit to all members of the family.

> 'The boys feel that a working mother makes for easy home relationships as my life does not centre round them and they have room to breathe.' (WF)

Women with children have so many domestic things to do apart from their professional responsibilities that they have to work extremely hard both to maintain their family relationships and to develop their careers. Care of elderly and infirm relatives also tends to fall on women and one very senior academic reported spending 15 years looking after a series of elderly relatives.

Some informants regretted the costs of conflict between home and work including not having time to develop and maintain close friendships - but, as mentioned earlier, some people made little or no reference to their home situations.

Lack of educational qualifications was reported as having been an obstacle for four of the black male and two of the Asian informants. In two cases, Jamaican and Indian qualifications were not recognised. One man had come up through the unorthodox route of the Youth and Community Service and had some difficulty in getting sufficient recognition for his achievements in order to progress to more advanced qualifications. Although he eventually gained a Masters degree, this early struggle still rankled. The position has probably improved significantly over the last ten years with all institutions improving access to higher education especially for mature students and those with non-standard qualifications - although financial constraints are now greater. It is also now illegal to refuse a student access to accomodation on the grounds of colour, such as was experienced by one of the informants. He was also told that there was no point in taking a PGCE as 'he would never get a job'.

Ageism

Frequently, women and black applicants reported feeling that the grounds on which they had been rejected from a post were unreasonable especially if they were told they had insufficient experience and were too young for a post. Two of the younger black women and one black man believed they had been discriminated against because of their age (amongst other things) - they were told that they did not have enough experience. Further investigation would be necessary to establish whether or not this was justification for non-promotion of black and/or female members of staff. A white woman was told she was too young for a post which was then given to an even younger man and a very well qualified black woman was rejected in favour of a considerably less well-qualified white woman who acknowledged the bias operating in her appointment. Thus,

> 'Black women tend to be classified first and foremost as black with only a secondary consideration to their identities as women.' (BF)

At the other end of the scale, women who have had breaks in their careers tend to be older than men with similar academic experience, and thus, in universities, are unlikely to be able to gain the required research experience as well as teach. It was pointed out by one informant that working in the field of Higher Education is particularly disadvantageous to women because of the necessity for school teacher experience. Male academics in education tend to be older than other academics, and women even older.

Financial obstacles, surprisingly, were mentioned in only a few cases and, then, were only applied to insufficient funding for study and being without an income as a student.

Reaction to obstacles

'A spur to career' and 'adversity is formative' were phrases mentioned in this respect - but then we were not talking to those who had 'dropped out' or been overwhelmed by circumstances. Informants advised would-be managers, for example, to:

> 'convert negative experiences into positives' and 'see failures as springboards to success'.

Persistent resistance was a method claimed to be used to good effect by an Asian woman who had been rudely refused access to her Chief Education Officer by his secretary. She insisted on being seen and remained sitting in his office until she gained access. At the eventual meeting, her Indian qualifications were approved and she was able to start teaching the following day. To do this required considerable self-confidence as well as persistence.

Black female informants, clearly, have had to challenge racism and sexism simultaneously to acquire management positions where they can be effective

and make a difference. This might mean, according to some informants, rejecting exploitative positions such as a deputy or lower grade post, or having the confidence to go for a higher status post despite opposition from a current line manager. For black managers, taking up a senior post can be interpreted as being, in the long term, to the advantage of other black colleagues - because it contributes to the promotion of equal opportunities in the organisation. Being part of black collectives or networks clearly boosts self-confidence and provides a forum through which to express ideas which then can be reiterated in a more public areana. Thus, black managers can be seen to be strong:

> 'You have to be careful not to give the image that you are a pushover,' and yet you can 'be so reasonable that they cannot object to what you are saying'. (BF & BM)

One woman's reaction against sexism, when not shortlisted for a post when she had been doing the job for some time, was to fight back via an industrial tribunal.

> 'Fighting the equal opportunities corner was difficult - I didn't have the job. No work plus I was fighting the case' (WF)

She eventually won the case but resented having been put into the position where she was obliged to mount the challenge.

One way of coping with the stress and workload, say, of caring for elderly relatives as well as continuing to operate effectively at a senior professional level, was to compartmentalise and to develop a thick skin.

> 'I think it bred nervous stamina which is probably as important as [having] the hide of a rhinocerous' (WF)

A common reaction to the obstacles that confronted them, was for our informants to aim for a position of authority which would entail them being high profile and also taking the responsibility of being the delegate for black or female groups. As has already been mentioned, ' a good black' is in much demand. To get to such a position may require an individual to

challenge and confront negative professional attitudes of staff and parents, as an Asian headteacher has done. She, like others, has become conscious about tackling gender and 'race' issues together. This is, in itself, a politicising activity and those who acknowledge discrimination against themselves are inevitably pulled into local political action.

vi. *Isolation in current position*

The effect of discrimination on the basis of gender or 'race' is to isolate the manager who may be the first or only black and/or woman in a senior position. As has already been pointed out, there is often prejudice (or sexism and/or racism) from one's peers. A black male informant believed he was constantly under surveillance from both black and white colleagues to see how he functioned as a manager and as a black colleague. Similarly, one of the reasons why a black headteacher rejected a job was because she felt everyone was waiting to see her 'fall flat on her face'. Another black headteacher described his experiences with an all-white staff as 'horrendous' and a senior manager reported that she 'always felt that most of my male colleagues were just waiting for me to put a foot wrong.' (WF)

Seniority may also mean that the manager no longer has close friends on the staff - even if they had previously existed. Isolation may also extend beyond the organisation; for example, a black headteacher reported being on the receiving end of some of the most appalling racism from colleagues to the extent that his union membership had been threatened. Isolation, thus, needs to be considered alongside most informants' expressed preference for participatory styles of management. Are these irreconcilable positions? Certainly, as a black female manager put it, 'managing people has tremendous "highs" but carries with it lots of "lows"'.

Distinguishable routes for women and ethnic minorities to senior management

Three principal career routes for informants were identified: (i) personal networks, (ii) opportunities in equal opportunities, and (iii) individualistic paths.

i) *Personal professional networks*

Some informants claimed their careers had developed as a direct result of being invited to apply for named posts, or by being offered jobs without having to compete with other applicants. Thus, fairly early on in his career, a black informant who later became a professor, was invited by an established academic to join him in setting up a new graduate department in a new academic field. This informant has subsequently been invited to apply for other posts so has not experienced any real open competition in his career.

It was also noticeable that those who had particularly benefitted from this personal support for their career enhancement were mainly Oxbridge graduates and that in two or three cases, the offers came from other Oxbridge graduates or from their original colleges. For example, one senior academic noted:

> 'It would have been churlish to reject my [Oxbridge] tutor's suggestion that I should apply [for a post at X] (WF)

Informants who came into this category appear to have been skilled at using whatever individual professional networks they have had at their disposal. Others have sometimes had deliberately to create them.

ii) *Opportunities in the field of equal opportunities*

Many of the informants felt that their careers had been enhanced by their interest in issues concerning 'race', gender and culture. These interests either led them to be invited to apply for posts or certainly strengthened their applications for posts particularly concerned with equal

opportunities. Virtually all the black informants held, at some time or other, a post concerned with equal opportunities; such as race or multicultural advisor, community project director or for teaching specific minority groups. Similarly, many had focused study for their higher degrees on issues concerned with equal opportunities.

A significant number had contributed to authoritative committees such as the Thomas, Rampton and Hargreaves Committees or had been seconded to advise the Department of Education and Science (DES) or Schools Council. There were only one or two black informants whose present posts do not appear to have arisen as a consequence of activism in the equal opportunities field. This may be compared to only one or two white informants whose careers have developed via equal opportunities. Thus, while the field of equal rights and opportunities appears to offer career openings, it has also arguably channelled black educationalists into specialised fields - in which, by definition, they have a vested interest. Hence, whilst they have had a genuine intent to work with issues concerning the black community, one of the problems they appear to face is that identified by black informants as 'institutional racism' - which 'wants to set you up as a leader but in the longer term retains the *status quo*'. There appear to be few inroads into 'mainstream' educational posts by the black community which, thus, remains professionally ghettoised. With the recent decrease in equal opportunities posts, these routes to career enhancement are likely to become less available.

iii) *Individualistic paths*

Some informants' careers appeared not to develop in predictable directions. They were individualistic in the sense that their career progress was neither in the gift of others nor a consequence of a strong underlying commitment or consistent philosophy. For example, remarks made about this form of career progression included 'a bit of luck, an accident'; 'being at the right place at the right time'; 'opportunities came wherever I was'.

It seems that these self-deprecatory comments, from three white women, were influenced by a culture in which it is perceived unfashionable - if not

unwise and gauche - to assert (for women especially) that one has obtained a post on merit. Yet, there was an element of luck for these women in that they were not really in competition with other candidates for particular jobs. One white woman described it as 'luck' that she met her PhD supervisor whom she subsequently married before they embarked on mutually supportive research careers. However, her potential for success might have been the incentive for him to get to know her better as well as the other way round!

There appears to be an element of good fortune when a particular post becomes available but it could hardly be attributed to luck when,.for example, the first black woman is appointed to a post in stiff competition with some 70 applicants. 'Chance' was ascribed as being responsible for the direction of one black male respondent and that made him 'angry'. The distinctive factor in our sample of successfully promoted managers was that they recognised opportunities and seized them. Thus:

> 'Don't expect success to come in a rush. If you are a woman, you need to do more. Part of a woman's conditioning is not to question a man's right to have a career whereas for a woman, each career step moves her further and further outside what is seen as a conventional role.' (WF)

iii) *Characteristic career strategies used or experienced by educational managers*

The following four broad career strategies emerged in the analysis of the interview data. However, informants appear to have moved, on occasion, from one strategy to another at different phases of their lives. We have termed the career strategies: (i) Deliberate career; (ii) Drifter; (iii) Opportunist; (iv) Irrepressible.

i) Within this project, it has been possible to identify **deliberate careerists** as those who have taken control of their career planning, considered mid- to long-term strategies and used their present position and opportunities to forward their career position. These particular managers rely on high visibility and tend to use an approach, common among conventional male managers, of constructing competence through public

performance (this approach is described more fully in Grant, 1989). The deliberate careerist identifies a range of available choices including sideway moves. Indeed, typical of the advice they give to would-be managers is to 'retain ownership of your own career'. Others claimed to have 'got into a position where she could influence change' , to have taken 'a number of deliberate steps to get the institution to look at me' and that 'everything from that point onwards was designed to take me onwards towards that career' (all articulated by white women).

Another white woman, when Personal Assistant to a Chief Education officer, realised, after taking his advice and going back to teaching, that 'I wanted to get to the top'. A white, female professor claimed that her high achieving school 'organised where I was going'.

For some informants, this deliberate career drive came relatively late after a rather random career start. At this point, they adopted strategies such as networking, becoming high profile in their own institution, and applying for prestigious jobs in other organisations. One woman set her career moves in a political context, thus:

> 'It is important that black women acquire management positions because that is where they will be effective and make a difference' (BF)

Another informant within this category moved out of education and into the church and then back into education as part of the struggle to extend education and opportunities to young blacks. He saw this as an individual response to:

> 'counter the implementation of government schemes such as YTS which shove black kids into practical skills and give white kids opportunities to train to use new technology (BM)

ii) The **career drifter** is organisation led: the employee allows the organisation to structure her or his career (it is more fully described in Hilsum & Start, 1974; Grant, 1984). Career drifters work hard and wait for recognition, applying (modestly) for promotion prospects as they occur. These individuals use self-effacing strategies and low visibility (as

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described in Grant, 1989) and do not seek power, but may welcome it as a reasonable reward for hard work for the organisation. Women, in particular, as we have seen, seem uncomfortable when openly seeking power and, thus, may be happier with this career stance (Woo, 1985).

The term 'drifter' may be slightly misleading. What seemed to gain recognition among project participants was individuals who just want to do a good job, having loyalty to the particular organisations for which they work. So it is the career drifter rather than the professional 'layabout' who is identified here; one who does not make direct career choices but responds to opportunities (and constraints) when they are presented.

iii) The **opportunist** seizes whatever job opportunities are feasible and attractive at the time. Sometimes, these come in the form of invitations to take up or apply for posts. We apply this term here especially to those who found it difficult to make long-term career predictions while in the throes of domestic commitments but ultimately made a career from a series of unorthodox, accidental connections and experiences. This syndrome has more in common with those who are forced to make geographical moves to follow their spouse or partner and it was observed that 'women adapt and shift careers more than men' (WF).

iv) The **irrepressible** are those who use disadvantage as a spur, and respond to obstacles as irritations to be overcome, reinforcing determination rather than diminishing it. Participants suggested that those in this category tend to go into small businesses where they are not constrained by the rules and prejudices of an organisation. It would certainly be interesting to review the motives of the increasing number of educational consultants. Many of our informants, nonetheless, could be identified as irrepressible, willing to stand out and argue for what they believed in - a course of action, however, which requires both energy and courage. Thus, 'part of feminist commitment should be to take up the challenges and compromises of management'. (WF)

However, we wish to reiterate that individuals do not necessarily fit neatly into one category, but rather move between categories. A totally

deliberate careerist seems rare, and there were none who admitted to being such in the project group. But there were individuals who displayed ambition fairly early on, while others recognised their own potential more gradually. The catalyst within the organisation which dictated the career path of the **drifter** was often a rejection or being subject to gross discrimination. Subsequently, this individual might become **irrepressible** for a phase and then settle latterly into more deliberate career strategies. Women with young children or who followed their husbands' careers early on, were often able to take control of their advancement later on.

In concluding this section, we consider the messages emerging from our discussions with educational managers about their careers. The most depressing message is that actions of discrimination and promotion of **unequal** opportunities are rife among the best educated people and most senior education institutions in the land. It is evident that complacency and bad practice abounds; moreover, headteachers, teachers, parents and governors are still, in their practices and behaviour, providing examples of prejudice and discrimination for the young people in their charge to follow.

Those at the receiving end of painful discriminatory experiences have had to be resilient and extremely hard working to succeed, often at cost to family, friends and a broader personal development. All but a handful of our informants reported instances of prejudicial treatment and it appears that an Oxbridge education - and/or the background that facilitates access to Oxbridge - is still a crucial factor in both establishing professional networks and in maintaining one's own and other's expectation of achievement.

Concern with equal opportunities has proved an effective career route for many of our informants with a strong symbiotic relationship developing between commitment to equal opportunities leading to authoritative and powerful positions - and the ability this gives to reinforce and take action on that commitment.

Overall, more black women than black men from our informants appear to have achieved senior positions in education (except in higher education) and this may be related to the early alienation and under-achievement of black and ethnic minority males. As one of our informants put it, this is not so much a reflection of their limited talents but rather a consequence of general societal racism, peer group pressure and a tendency to conform to social expectations. Most black graduates in our group of informants reported experiencing difficulty in gaining employment. Promotion appears far less easy to obtain than for white graduates (for further details on this, see Brennan & McGeever's project for the CRE, 1990). Moreover, black men may be potentially most isolated of the three project sub-groups; having access neither to 'old boy' or women's networks, although they showed themselves aware of the power of networking to support their careers (as was also apparent among black male managers interviewed in the United States and Canada).

The good news is in the occasional breakthrough, by those educationists and managers determined to improve equal opportunities in their organisations, to combat discrimination and to promote the development of their own female and black colleagues. Moreover, our informants had very practical admonitions for would-be educational managers. (See Appendix III)

INDIVIDUAL MANAGEMENT STYLE

Interviewees were asked about their management style and how they functioned as managers. As you will see, discernible patterns emerged of difference and similarities of management approach despite the comparatively small number of project participants (38). There were five broad patterns of response, four of which concurred with definitions in the literature and a fifth which cut across the other four. These were distributed as follows:

Democratic: flat, democratic, participative, collaborative, team-working etc. 18

Leadership: firm, directive, prepared to assume leadership role etc. 8

Midway: includes elements of both 'democratic' and 'leadership' management styles: 7

Diffuse: no clear management style identifiable 4

Self Doubting: self critical, sets high standards but doubts achievability 7

Democrats

The **democratic** style, much in evidence in the literature, appeared to be favoured by the majority of the interviewees; that is, it was claimed as their preferred style by over half black male managers and white female managers, yet only by two of the ten black female managers. The following instances derived from the interview notes were fairly typical:

> '[C.] assumes that everyone wants to be involved and participate in decision making. Also assumes that decisions won't be made without consultation' (WF)
>
> 'L. describes her management style as "open"...it's a useful style because people get to know her' (BF)
>
> 'He describes it [his management style] as consultative which is well rooted in democratic principles' (BM)

'C. believes in open democracy, openness and total involvement with his staff team' (BM)

Leaders

In contrast, the **leadership** approach seemed to be preferred more by black female managers (four) than by either their black male (two) or white female (two) counterparts. The range of descriptions of this approach included the following:

'E. believes that a good manager needs to be firm but fair. Her style may at times deny democracy. She believes that democracy has caused powerful managers to be destroyed and she guards against that by observing, listening and developing effective strategies for change' (BF)

'W. feels a high level of responsibility - an awful lot of things depend on the decisions she makes. W. takes being a role-model seriously...She is highly principled in behaviour' (WF)

This management approach may be adopted because more consultation could delay urgently needed change or because a manager might need to assert his or her competency as manager. Hence,

'B. would prefer to be more consultative and 'thrash out things with staff'. However, because staff have been used to doing things in their own way under the old regime, B has had to take a firm and directive approach - "otherwise, people would walk all over me and the school would never move on'. (BM)

'J. considers good management practice to include good supervision, performance appraisal, accountability and clear structure. She believes that the role of a manager is to enhance good delivery of face-to-face work...'. (BF)

Midway

Six white female managers appeared to have adopted what we have termed **midway** management styles. None of the black male interviewees and only one black female interviewee came near to this approach. Such styles, as the term suggests, incorporate aspects of 'democratic' and 'leadership' management approaches, as exemplified below:

'D. has always been a 'solo player' and she found it hard to be part of a team in the Directorate. She does not want to be a 'quasi-man'...at the same time there is nothing wrong with using the devices men use...To counteract this [male tendency to take her ideas over]. she advocated networking, nurturing and self-consciousness as three important strategies' (WF)

'To describe her role as 'facilitator' is not strong enough for the top job. She sees herself more as a visionary strategist, making things happen in order to get a better future for the organisation' (WF)

Diffuse

The management approaches of the black female managers among our informants appeared most difficult to categorise either because their position in the hierarchy was not sufficiently senior or because they were more circumspect about how they operated as managers. Just under a third came into this sub-group compared with only one of their male and none of their white female equivalents. For example, from a position outside the senior hierarchy, an interviewee explained her inability to engage in standard management practices.

'university management structures are highly middle class, white and male dominated...she finds herself as a black working class woman outside of the norm of being acceptable on three counts; her class, race and gender' (BF)

Self-doubters

An additional category emerged from the data which cut across the personal management styles detailed above; that of **self-criticism** or **self-doubt**. For example, although advocating networking and nurturing, a white female manager is reported as having admitted to:

'a personal tendency towards authoritarianism...To combat the effects of this, she has had to learn when to use diplomacy and when not.'(WF))

Another interviewee believed she was a:

> '"poor" manager because I am impatient. I like to work well from the start. I do set high standards and I'm not always as sympathetic as I should be to the fact that other people have commitments'. (WF)

Interestingly, this somewhat stereotypical female characteristic (which perhaps reveals the conflicting demands of high status and leadership, and traditional notions of femininity) was displayed by as many as six of the white women compared with only one black woman and no black men.

Other features emerging from this part of the research included the discomfort expressed by some of the interviewees with having to deal with conflict, particularly identified by seven of the white women. It should not be surprising that if managers embrace an open and collegial way of working, challenges to their authority may seem hurtful and difficult to deal with. For example:

> '[E] feels uncomfortable with direct confrontation, partly because she has a rather idealised view of her own management style' (WF).

Others claimed that their management style was deeply grounded in equal opportunities (five in all, two black men and three white women). Thus:

> 'A. has some non-negotiable principles to do with equal opportunities and to do with rigour'. (WF)

A further feature of the research was the importance of networking and support groups; claimed by several of the black managers (men and women) and a quarter of the white female managers. Thus:

> 'J. believes in keeping and maintaining a network of contacts which includes family which is very important to her' (BF) and 'J. has created her own network mainly because she has been in Oxbridge a long time'. (WF)

Moreover:

> 'B. has also benefitted from being a member of the Black Teachers Support Group, as it has brought him into contact with other colleagues who are able to understand the pressures of being a "Black" headteacher' (BM)

Networking was also seen as an antidote to the isolation and loneliness with which black managers, in particular, are frequently confronted. Thus:

> 'JM feels that black people are reluctant to take on management roles because of the loneliness and isolation associated with the job...She just hates being on her own. In this regard, JM believes it is important to have networks' (BF)

INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT APPROACH AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Given the orientation of the project, questions were asked about institutional strategies for encouraging staff towards management roles and the principles guiding institutional judgement and practices. These related to equal opportunities practices and inevitably 'spilled over' into discussion of specific institutional equal opportunities policies.

Analysis of this data has therefore been organised along three dimensions; first, the **practices** emerging from questions on institutional strategy; second, according to **types** of institutions - schools, polytechnics, universities, HMI etc.; and third, the institutional **ethos/degree** of development of equal opportunities policies.

First, we address some of the findings around type and ethos of institution and then deal with practice separately.

Institutional Analysis

From the discussion concerning institutional ethos, it seems possible to draw on the emergent themes to construct a continuum of the institutional adoption of, or involvement with, equal opportunities - primarily in

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relation to staff opportunities but with some reference to students. The continuum may be described as follows:

i) (ETHOS) Equal opportunities is a significant part of the ethos of the institution ie reflected in power structures.

6 institutions

ii) (COMMITMENT/PRACTICAL ACTION) There is a genuine commitment towards good equal opportunities practice. 12 institutions

iii) (PREDISPOSITION) Institution is in the process of working towards equal opportunities. 7 institutions

iv) (LIP-SERVICE) There is some superficial consideration of equality issues.

8 institutions

v) (APATHY) There is little evidence of awareness of or adherence to equal opportunities issues. 4 institutions

(* One informant did not describe the institutional strategy of her current institution but, nevertheless, referred positively to the policies of the GLC and ILEA)

The continuum can also be represented diagramatically thus:

Ethos<——Commitment/Practical<——Predisposition<——Lip-service<——Apathy
Action

An institution with an ethos of equal opportunities is one, for instance, where there is awareness of the full range of obstacles barring individual progress and where every attempt has been made to remove such obstacles. Thus:

> 'The stated ethos of the organisation is to create a supportive, comfortable. non-hostile place where black people could meet, organise and talk openly...There is a large percentage of black staff in the college, in excess of 30-40%...Black staff are represented at those [top tier] levels...there are more black women than black men...There is a systematic staff monitoring process in the college which is explicit, public and open...The recruitment and selection process is

systematically adhered to with black staff members sitting on the panel' (BM).

In contrast, those institutions, mainly schools, which were designated as within the **commitment/practical action** category have taken major steps in terms of eradicating inequality but still have a fair way to go. For example:

'The school prospectus has a very loud commitment to equal opportunities and P. says that she never loses an opportunity to reinforce this in curriculum materials, displays and uses her own skill...as a networker to encourage dissemination of good practice. [She] has some departments which are better than others which means that pupils get an uneven experience. However the pupils are very aware and take on dissemination themselves, challenging teachers who are sexist or racist.' (WF)

Those institutions having a **predisposition** to change but having only recently started the change process, were described as at the first stages of policy formulation policy. However, there was no evidence that the policies, as yet, were having any real effect. Thus:

'The polytechnic has a formal equal opportunities policy. So far, it has been implemented by removing barriers rather than looking for positive actions. D. has made some positive action suggestions which have so far been ignored but she remarked that this could be a function of timimg. She hopes that the introduction of an appraisal system will need to the monitoring of race and gender. She has made the suggestion that every interview panel should contain at least one woman. Appraisal training is being conducted at present, by a consultancy, and has not overtly featured equal opportunities as a focus'. (WF)

As is implicit in the term, **lip-service** institutions appear to have done little more than make the most tokenistic nods towards equality issues and policy decisions may not be widely known. Thus:

'S. is not aware of any particular [promotion] strategies in her university. A Staff Development Officer has been appointed but without any obvious supporting budget. The staff appraisal system is assumed to lead on to staff development. Promotion procedure includes an attempt to make the criteria more explicit - though not necessarily clearer...As far as S. can gather, appointments and promotions committees are entirely male and no-one is particularly concerned

about that fact...There are very few staff or home students from ethnic minorities...[However]..There is explicit equal opportunities policy in the university covering staff of all kinds, and students, in the areas of harassment and appointments.' (WF)

The final category, **apathy**, where there is little evidence of any awareness or adherence to equality issues, is the smallest numeric category emerging from the analysis. A very bleak picture is given of a hostile and often 'superior' environment, unsympathetic and insensitive to the needs of its staff in the following extract.

'Having worked in two universities she suggests that there is something peculiar to university departments' culture which limits the potential of equal opportunities and how staff are allowed to develop their full potential. University management structures are highly middle class, white and male dominated which fosters a culture that supports the old public school boy network...As a black woman she has come to to terms not only with the 'expected' oppression from white males but also the lack of support and at times deliberate undermining that comes from white women colleagues so she has had to develop strategies to insulate herself and challenge racism and sexism'. (BF)

In reflecting on the institutional continuum, it would appear that there are fewer institutions at the extremes of the spectrum and more in the commitment, predisposition and lip-service categories. It would be interesting to see whether this pattern is reflected nation-wide, given that our informants are more likely than most to be working in institutions attempting to move in equal opportunities directions.

The continuum can also be presented according to particular type of institution (see Table 1). What is suggested here, though it must be remembered that this is by no means representative of a statistical sample of all educational institutions, is that lower status educational institutions such as schools, adult and further education and the youth service, appear more likely to have used the freedom and/or seen the need to develop policies on equal opportunities. An alternative view is that such smaller, more intimate and cohesive institutions, where staff members meet regularly, might have a more humane and sympathetic perspective towards equality issues.

TABLE 1: Institutional Continuum

Educational Institutions	ethos	commit-ment	predis-position	lip-service	apathy
University			1	3	2
Polytechnic	1		2	1	
F.E.	2				
Adult Education		1	1		
School	1	9	1		
Quango			1	1	1
HMI				2	1
LEA	1	1		1	
Union		1			
Youth Service	1				
Research Institute			1		
TOTAL	6	12	7	8	4

In contrast, higher status (and larger) institutions such as universities and the HMI seem to see less reason for change. Polytechnics, on the other hand, appear to be at an intermediate stage of attempting change but not having got very far. Interestingly, most employers in the education sectors appear to want to be seen as interested in equality issues since they usually describe themselves as 'equal opportunity employers' when advertising for staff in the press. For example, in **The Times Higher Education Supplement** of 2nd August 1991, of the 43 posts advertised by British institutions, approximately two thirds claimed to be equal opportunities employers. The fact that in identifying themselves as such, they are under no obligation to make any changes is, in our view, highly significant.

Practices Arising from Institutional Strategies

One of the main purposes of the project was to draw up an agenda of ideas and strategies in relation to equal opportunities practices derived from the institutions with which our informants were connected. As can be seen

in Appendix II, some practices are potentially more popular than others but all, it seems to us, merit consideration.

Of the large number of practices mentioned in relation to the improvement of institutions, **proper staff recruitment/ appointment/selection procedures** and **staff development** are by far the most established, mentioned by nearly half of the interviewees. Next is the implementation of effective **appraisal schemes**, felt particularly important as they enable attention to be paid to staff members, whose careers otherwise might be overlooked. The focus, by nearly a quarter of the interviewees on the relatively few black or ethnic minority representatives and on the white male domination of educational institutions together provide a powerful indictment of inequalities in staffing patterns. On two occasions only were claims made for having a **good representation of black and ethnic minority staff.** Not unexpectedly, the importance of **explicit equal opportunities policies** was given priority by nearly a quarter of the group as was, to a lesser extent, **mentoring** and **networking.** The appointment of a **post of responsibility** for equal opportunities and the development of **policy on student access** were also identified as of considerable importance. (For further details, see Appendix II)

Findings emerging from informants other than the main group

Information gained from the company visits revealed that, in the main, equal opportunities' initiatives for the recruitment and retention of women and black and ethnic minority staff eg detailed interview criteria, child-care provision, flexible working packages, fast track management schemes, were deemed important because of the predicted labour shortages in particular areas of the labour market in the mid-1990s. Thus much more effort was directed towards attracting and keeping staff than towards equitable management practices.

The most important themes emerging from colleagues in the Unites States and Canada were the importance of 'networking' and 'nurturing'. Otherwise, it seemed that strategies for getting to the top were much the same as in Britain - women in senior management positions are compelled to use similar

strategies to men, and black managers, whilst able to draw on their wider experience of racism, are obliged to adhere to conventional hierarchical roles.

CONCLUSIONS

In a qualitative study such as this, any findings are necessarily tentative. Their importance lies in the identification of trends rather than in the collection of 'hard' evidence. We suggest that the following themes and topics should be placed on the research and/or management agenda, as a consequence of this study.

1. ***Management Style*** The emergence from the interviews of a 'democratic' or 'flat' individual management style offers a sharp contrast to current 'top-down' management practices in educational institutions and is consistent with some of the research studies reported in the literature. As we have seen, there were five broad patterns of response to questions on management style, four of which concurred with definitions in the literature (democratic, leadership, midway, diffuse) and the fifth (self-doubting) which cut across the other four.

However, there was also evidence of differences in management style between sub-groups. For example, the often younger, black female managers seemed less comfortable with the flatter management styles preferred by their black male and white female counterparts. This might result from it being easier to get things done by 'pulling rank', if uncertain of one's acceptance by subordinates. Further, some white women among the interviewees seemed more self-critical and less sure about the strategies they had so far adopted, possibly because of perceived contradictions between their roles as leaders and current conceptions of femininity.

2. ***Institutional Profile*** There was evidence, despite variations in institutional practices, of good practice emerging from a minority of organisations. We identified a continuum in relation to the institutional adoption of, or involvement with, equal opportunities - primarily in relation to staff development but with some reference to students. We

termed these 'ethos', 'commitment/practical action', 'predisposition', 'lip-service' and 'apathy'.

Also evident was the comparatively greater progress made by smaller, lower status, educational institutions such as schools, Further Education and Adult Education Colleges because, perhaps, one of their primary aims is to provide positive role-models for pupils and young adults. The public higher education sector appears to be moving faster on equality issues than the universities.

3. ***Principles and Practices*** It seems possible, as illustrated in Appendix II, to develop a catalogue or sequence of equality principles and practices for educational institutions, which could form the basis for genuine change. Moreover, in identifying an institutional continuum which reflects levels of adoption of equal opportunities practice, we believe that we have begun, also, to explore the potential of whole-institution policies in the process of change. However, much more work is needed on detailing the processes, difficulties and contradictions in the implementation of such policies.

4. ***Under-representation*** There was substantial evidence of under-representation among non-white staff in most educational institutions, and particularly in the funding agencies, quangos, and educational administration. An illuminating example of this is the difficulty that project members had in locating senior black managers, particularly as, according to the Commission for Racial Equality, no records are kept in this area. On the other hand, though relatively few in number compared with their male counterparts, white women were more identifiable in senior hierarchies.

5. ***Racism and Sexism*** Racism and, to a lesser extent, sexism seems as endemic in education as elsewhere. Fighting discrimination and arguing for the right to equal treatment proved a battle and a strain for many of those interviewed. Some of the examples given are particularly shocking given that we have entered the final decade of the twentieth century. However, the characteristics of racism (and sexism) are now likely to be less

explicit than formerly. Thus, the operation of a colour-bar in Halls of Residence, reported by several informants, is now illegal. However, more insidious racist practices have emerged, for example, the more covert strategy of 'losing' application forms.

6. ***Career Trajectories*** Four different career trajectories were identified: 'deliberate career', 'drifter', 'opportunist', 'irrepressible' - though it was noted that some informants switched from one to another, say from 'drifter' to 'irrepressible', in the course of a career. Particularly important for black informants was the part that equal opportunities 'activism' has played in their career development and the closing up of some of those routes might place limitations on black career progression in the absence of alternative openings. Another, often unacceptable, strategy mentioned by black informants was to progress by becoming 'culturally white'. (Advice from informants for individuals aspiring to be managers is included in Appendix III.)

7. ***Research Methodology*** The research methodology adopted, that of life history, proved as rich a seam of information as had been anticipated. What was unanticipated was the therapeutic character that some of the interviews took, particularly for those being interviewed; and the two-way conversations which this approach seems to encourage.

Moreover, there were variations in the manner in which the interviews were conducted. Emphasis on 'race' and gender issues was likely to differ, depending on the paramount interests of the researchers and their interviewees. Also, some interviews were short and brisk, and kept very close to the project focus - on the informants' perception of management strategy. Others lasted far longer as interviewees re-visited some of the more 'difficult' parts of their lives: and a few seemed to 'take stock' in so doing. In these cases, the interview provided the possibility for reflection about career and life, which was concerned about the future as much as about the past.

** Appendix I provides more detailed discussion of project methodology. The other appendices present a synthesis of points made by informants with respective to effective strategies for gaining senior management status (Appendix III) and effective institutional practices to establish equality-orientated structures and behaviours (Appendix II). Interestingly, the three main sub-groups of interviewees - black women, black men and white women - may be paired according to similarities which they displayed. Black respondents, men and women, were united in their experiences of racism; many female interviewees, by their experiences of sexism; and black men and white women by their preferred management styles and the degree to which they were able to achieve success in existing structures.

APPENDIX I

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON METHODOLOGY

The Project Team

The project was originally set up by two white female researchers, Leone Burton and Gaby Weiner. However, in a project which focuses on gender and race, it was considered crucial to involve non-white researchers. Consequently, the project team was expanded to six to include three Afro-Carribean researchers - Agnes Bryan, Ros Howells and Barbara Quartey - and an experienced white researcher, Janet Powney, all of whom helped to develop research methodology and shared in the interviews which provided the main data for the project. Another researcher, Margaret Littlewood, completed a preliminary literature review. For a variety of reasons, the report was written by Janet Powney and Gaby Weiner in consultation with the other members of the team.

The Life History Approach

Using a life history research approach has been viewed as vital in the absence of personal documentary evidence (Roberts, 1984) - and it was largely because of lack of documentary evidence that this study was first envisaged. Life history has also been deemed as potentially therapeutic, a basis for collective consciousness (women's or class) or as a starting point for emancipatory action (Mies, 1983). Thus, in the case of women:

> Apart from the individual, practical and theoretical dimensions, the writing-down and discussion of life histories also has political and action orientated dimensions, aiming at creating a new collective consciousness among women and mobilising them for further social action.
>
> (Mies M., (1983), 'Towards a methodology of feminist research', in Bowles G. & Duelli Klein R., (eds.), **Theories of Women's Studies**, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul)

The Informants

White males were excluded from the research on the grounds that the predominant management model in the UK has developed from the values and practices of this group and one of the aims was to explore how people who are not white and male succeed within this model. In retrospect, it might have been useful to have included white male informants to see if individual characteristics of managers and their careers are generalisable to all management regardless of colour or gender. However, given the predominance of white males in senior management posts, selection would have proved problematic.

This group of informants was not a representative sample but rather a group of people with some characteristics of the target group, widely dispersed across educational institutions (ranging from an inner London primary school to an Oxbridge college) and across the (now narrow) binary divide in higher education. Most were identified through the networks of the project team; thus different sets of views would, no doubt, have been elicited from people from different networks.

Other Information Channels

Members of the project team contacted academic colleagues to discuss the feasibility of the project, and also visited companies identified by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) as having initiated strategies for enhancing the promotion of white women and black and ethnic minority men and women. Additionally, one of the team organised a workshop, attended by some 20 female managers (and one male), which focused on factors which had enhanced or inhibited their career progression, and another spent a week in the United States and Canada interviewing some 16 managers identified as 'experts' on equity issues and practices.

The Interviews

After much discussion, the decision was taken that white team members would interview only white respondents, and black team members, black

respondents. The reasons were that it was felt that the sensitivity of the data would be more easily explored by the interviewers and interviewees sharing a commonality.

Our definition of 'black' is broad insofar as it incorporates any of the respondents who are not white. A disadvantage of this broader definition, however, is that it cannot take into account the cultural differences within the defined groups (black males, black females, white females). Thus, little distinction is made between different black sub-groups such as those of Asian, Afro-Carribean or say, Chinese origin or between white ethnic minority groups such as Greeks, Turks, Irish or Scottish. However, assuming that such differences in experience and perception might occur within black and white sub-groups, the suggestion is that these would be less significant than those across black and white groups or in comparison to the 'norm' - the white male.

The interviews were tape recorded. They were designed to last about an hour although some were much longer and several, slightly shorter. Where possible, interviews were conducted face-to-face. However, in several cases, when meetings proved impossible to arrange (many of the people we wanted to interview had very busy work schedules), interviews were conducted over the telephone

Data Analysis and Report Writing

Full accounts of the interviews were written up and then returned to informants for amendment and verification as being a fair record of the interview. Interviewees could also add further comments having seen the written account of the interview and also delete such items as they did not wish to make public. All were guaranteed anonymity.

Finally, each transcript and summary was analysed and the analyses shared by members of the research team. From this preliminary analysis, two of the team developed a draft of the final report for circulation and comment from co-researchers.

APPENDIX II

PRACTICES ARISING FROM INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES

The focus, by nearly a quarter of the informants on the relatively few black and ethnic minority representatives and on the white male domination of educational institutions provide a powerful indictment of inequalities in staffing patterns. On only two occasions were claims made for having a good representation of black and ethnic minority staff. Of the large number of practices mentioned in relation to the improvement of institutions, the following practices and strategies were emphasised. They are presented in rank order according to their popularity with informants, with the most popular being listed first.

- proper staff recruitment/ appointment/selection procedures
- planned, effective staff development
- implementation of effective appraisal schemes
- explicit equal opportunities policies
- development of mentoring schemes
- networking
- appointment of a post of responsibility for equal opportunities
- development of policy on student access.

Also: development of procedures such as:

- flexitime
- part-time working
- child-care provision/creche facilities
- career break packages.

Within institutions: the encouragement of:

- staff groups dealing with 'race' and gender issues
- Black teacher groups/forums
- pupil/student/staff achievement,

Other strategies were also suggested, though less frequently;

- policies on racist or sexist behaviour
- using the Black press for recruitment
- the necessity for powerful role models,
- the need for a policy on harassment
- collective responsibility of senior management for equal opportunities.

There were also clear differences in managers' perceptions of appropriate strategies for promoting women; one complained about the 'glass ceiling' in her institution which prevented women reaching the most senior management positions, while another did not wish to 'promote career against marriage'.

APPENDIX III

ADVICE TO INDIVIDUALS WHO WANT TO BECOME MANAGERS

What follows is the summary list of advice provided by informants for individuals who aspire to become managers in an educational institutions. It has been organised into two sections: advice from black men and women and advice from white women. Looking across the two lists, there are such obvious similarities that it seems that many strategies can be shared in the mutual struggle to achieve equality, despite differences of gender, colour and class.

Black men and women: advised prospective managers to consider the following.

- have clear goals, and have good planning and preparation including groundwork for interviews
- be prepared to make sacrifices and be ready for disappointment
- seek necessary advice
- plan career moves but retain integrity

- be prepared to work hard and build up knowledge of management, especially organisational analysis and power dynamics.
- get into an influential position, feel assured that you are a quality worker and then challenge.
- don't lose touch with the family and the community because you will always need their support, and always give back to the community.
- blacks need to be better in competition compared to their white counterparts. Black women managers have to be twice as good because they are women and twice as good because they are black.
- meet the right people. Work out the strengths, the qualities you can bring to an organisation and then identify people who make judgements in these areas.
- uphold the principles of equal opportunity.
- don't let go or suffer silently; always speak out.
- there needs to be a constant refreshing of self.
- those in power and with authority should encourage other black people coming up behind

- learn the rules of the system and play them.
- develop appropriate social, political and academic skills.
- use black support networks which have on their agenda, ways of developing strategies to deal with racism and isolation as well as developing skills required for job advancement.
- be aware that racism can (must?) affect your career.

- remember, you are as good as anyone else.
- build up self-confidence.
- go for positions of authority

White women advised would-be-managers to consider the following:

- hard work, persistence, patience and staying power.
- take risks and seize opportunities; sometimes these might entail a change of direction or having a higher profile in an institution.
- get qualified.
- have confidence in your own ability.
- maintain a sense of humour.

- get support from: peers, tutors, networks, family, other professionals.
- networking, nurturing and self-consciousness: these are all important strategies.
- if developments cannot be achieved cooperatively, they should either be dropped, delayed or other methods of achieving change explored

- be instrumental; learn from others.
- as a manager, learn to pare things down to what is really important.
- use all strategies.
- learn discretion; 'when is it worth battering an issue or behaving covertly'.
- part of a feminist commitment must be to take up the challenges and compromises of management. Women should therefore go for influential positions.
- blame the system for negative experiences, not always yourself.
- work out and utilise strengths of others and how to learn to compensate for weakness.

- don't lose your balance over sexist comments. Use the 'Dreadnought' method ie a deliberate display of your own rigorous intellectual abilities which are focused on the sexist individual when there is sufficient audience present to witness your strength.
- get better at decoding written messages: 'Women tend to see blame where not intended and men see praise where not intended'.
- develop the courage to promote yourself; do not be squeamish.
- APPLY for good positions.

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